

ELLEN WOODLEY,

A NOVEL,

IN TWO VOLUMES.

BY MRS. BONHOTE,

AUTHOR OF

PARENTAL MONITOR.

OLIVIA; OR, DESERTED BRIDE.

AND

DARNLEY VALE; OR, EMILIA FITZROY.

VOL. I.

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ELLEN WOODLEY.

CHAPTER I.

IN a retired part of England resided a clergyman, as much distinguished for his piety, the simplicity of his life, manners, and unshaken integrity, as he was to be pitied for being constrained to live in obscurity upon a very limited income.

Vol. I.

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He

He was humane, benevolent, and generous; and had so well improved his mind by a close application to study, that few excelled him in the knowledge of history, both antient and modern. Having but little interest amongst the great, he could not obtain any better preferment than a living, which brought him in about fourscore pounds a year, with which he was perfectly contented, as to his own gratification; but sometimes a wish would arise in his bosom, that he had a little more to spare for his beloved, his amiable children. All such desires, however, he suppressed as much as possible, and never permitted a repining word to escape his lips.

He was left a widower within the short space of six years after he commenced

menced husband. Two children were all that remained to console and reconcile him to the trying cares of life, after being deprived by death of a gentle, and virtuous wife, whom he had loved with ardent sincerity, and cherished with the fondest and most watchful tenderness, and with whom he had known as much felicity as had ever been bestowed on man. When he looked at his children, he gave way to a momentary despair; and exclaimed, in the language of Lord Lyttelton, in his beautiful monody, written on the death of his lady,

Sweet babes! who like the little playful fawns,
 Were wont to trip along these verdant lawns
 By your delighted mother's side,
 Who now your infant steps shall guide?

B 2

Ah!

Ah ! where is now the hand, whose tender care
To every virtue would have formed your youth,
And strew'd with flowers the thorny ways of truth ?

O loss beyond repair !

O wretched father ! left alone,
To weep their dire misfortune, and thy own !
How shall thy weakened mind, oppress'd with woe,
And drooping o'er thy *Ellen's* grave,
Perform the duties that you doubly owe !

Now she, alas ! is gone.

From folly and from vice their helpless age to save ?

Resignation, aided by time, softened the poignancy of Mr. Woodley's grief ; but, for the sake of those dear children, so unfortunately deprived of a tender and virtuous mother, he determined never to form a second engagement ; and though, when he first became a widower, he had not reached the prime of life, he gave up his whole time and attention to rear the lovely representatives of
his

his regretted Ellen, to innocence and virtue.

As he was confined to live in a very obscure village, he was obliged to educate them wholly himself; the employment strengthened and increased his affection. He took into his house an elderly woman, to superintend the business of his family, and instruct Ellen in needle work; but, in having done so, he had been careful to make choice of a person who had been brought up above the vulgar, whose morals were pure, and whose life had been blameless.

If any one who reads this volume can recollect the sweet and interesting description of a country clergyman, by Dr. Goldsmith, they have but to

B₃ imagine

imagine they see him in Mr. Woodley; who was so like the picture there described, I have been often led to think, he must have been the person for whom the portrait was designed.

“ At church, with meek and unaffected grace,
“ His looks adorn’d the venerable place ;
“ Truth from his lips prevail’d with double sway,
“ And fools who came to scoff, remain’d to pray.”

Though his income was too inconsiderable to admit of his receiving many visitors at his humble dwelling, yet the children of want and misery rarely went from his door unrelieved. Mr. Woodley was ever a welcome guest amongst his honest parishioners; and the little Ellen and Valentine met with the same cordial reception as their good parent. Being early trained in the paths of virtue, they promised to repay their kind and exemplary father

father for all his tender and anxious cares.

Ellen was lovely as Hebe, fair as Venus, pure as an Angel; lively, sensible, and of the sweetest disposition. She was gentle as the dove, harmless as the lamb, and modest, without being reserved.

Valentine, who was designed by his father for the church, was on his part equally amiable; his person was good, his countenance open, manly, and pleasing; the rose of health glowed on his cheek; he had a pair of penetrating dark eyes, that denoted sensibility, and an intelligent mind; he was warm in his temper, but a moment's recollection served to bring him to reason, and a sense of his fault;

he had a strong and retentive memory, comprehended his instructions with astonishing facility, and, though playful, he was not prone to idleness. These were the principal outlines which marked the opening of his character. As he increased in years he improved in virtue and goodness; his accomplishments and striking qualities gained him many friends, one of whom, a wealthy farmer, was so well pleased with him, that he kindly offered to lend Mr. Woodley two hundred pounds, if he wanted that sum, to equip his son, and support him at his first going to Cambridge.

Valentine, who was three years older than his sister, was most tenderly attached to her; and Ellen, who saw in her brother so many perfections and
good

good qualities united, was on her part not deficient in making him an equal return of affection. Next her father, he was the beloved object dearest to her heart. They were inseparable companions, and mutual assistants to each other in the progress of education. Ellen's tears could at any time soften Valentine from passion to tenderness; and Valentine could, by his persuasions, or displeasure, drive any little stubbornness or heedlessness from the mind of his sister.

The young man's chief regret, at the thought of leaving his dear paternal home, and beloved native village, arose from the unwillingness which he felt at the painful idea of being separated from his sister; who, on her part, considered her brother's

B 5

going

going to leave her as the severest trial she could possibly have to encounter. They mutually lamented the unkind necessity of their parting, and secretly shed many tears; but carefully concealed their artless sorrow from the observation of their tender parent, lest they should increase the anguish which they knew he must feel at being obliged to part with a son, who for many years had been his companion and friend.

At length the hour of separation arrived; which, though long dreaded by the parties, was sustained with apparent fortitude by all but Ellen, who wept incessantly, and repeatedly urged her father not to send her brother away. Valentine, however, amidst his most tender regrets at leaving

leaving his father and sister, felt a secret satisfaction at the thoughts of being soon to enter that world of which he had heard so much and seen so little, and from which he had sometimes sighed at being so long secluded. Yet, the fond emotions of his father, which added additional force to his parting admonitions,—the tears of his sister, who hung about him with unutterable fondness,—were daggers to his heart. He promised the one to be all *he* wished; and tenderly consoled the other with repeated assurances of writing frequently, and returning at every vacation, to enliven his paternal home with his presence.

No sooner was the carriage out of sight, into which Valentine bounded, (to conceal his own agonizing pangs, and

and to put an end to those tender adieus, which he knew not how to receive with becoming fortitude) than Mr. Woodley retired to his study, and poor Ellen hurried into the garden, to give a more unrestrained freedom to her tears, and lament the first real sorrow she had ever known. She ran into a little arbour, which Valentine had reared with his own hand; she saw his implements for gardening lie useless; she took them up, wept over them, and then carefully locked them up in a little closet, in which she placed her most valued treasures. She next visited every flower, tree, and shrub, which he had planted, or that she had heard her dear brother admire; and promised to take care of them during his absence. She knew not that herself was the lovely flower he most

most regretted to leave behind him. She plucked a few sprigs of the lily of the valley, and placed them in her throbbing bosom; her tears dropt on the flowers, and she was pleased that they appeared to weep with her, who herself might at this moment have been justly compared to the drooping lily, bending beneath the cold showers of an untimely and chilling spring.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

VERY soon after the departure of Valentine from the village, Sir Henry and Lady Alford arrived at a noble Villa, known by the name of Myrtle Grove, which was situated within half a mile of Mr. Woodley's. It had for many years previous to his being presented to the living of E***, been inhabited only by servants; and the present ambitious owners had, in a few years after their marriage, left
all

all the real enjoyments to be derived from a genteel and easy fortune, to brave every danger of earth, sea, and air, sooner than give up the opportunity, or rather the chance, of getting more wealth than they could well know how to spend. For this sordid purpose they had left the beautiful and peaceful seat of their less aspiring ancestors, and forsaken all the blessings they enjoyed in their native country, to embark for India; Sir Henry Alford being appointed by those in power to a very lucrative employment in the East, which, though he did not want, interest obtained, and avarice led him to accept.

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mined to spend the remainder of his days with luxury and splendour in old England; and growing weary of the bustling scenes of a busy world, in which he had figured with no great credit to his character, or to the secret satisfaction of his own heart, he remained no longer in London, than just to pay his devoirs at Court, and settle his affairs, before he hurried into the country, to enjoy himself at his favourite villa. This sudden retreat was much against the inclination of Lady Alford, who was impatient to exhibit some of her Asiatic splendour before she left town; but finding Sir Henry obstinately determined to retire, she consoled herself with the pleasing hopes of appearing in all her pomp, and glittering with a profusion of diamonds, on the birth night, from
which.

which she knew Sir Henry could not be absent.

Sir Henry and Lady Alford had one only son, a youth, whose character still remained to be formed, and his education to be completed. They had carried him abroad when he was very young; and as they could not afterwards prevail upon themselves to part with him, he had lost many advantages which he might have obtained had he been sent to England, and acquired many habits and ridiculous notions which it was become highly necessary should be eradicated; added to which, his health was nearly destroyed by indolence and luxury, and his temper spoiled by improper indulgence. He was vain, imperious, and uninformed; puffed up with pride, and

and made too conscious of his own importance, by being perpetually reminded of the immense fortune he would one day inherit. He considered the greatest part of his fellow creatures as a set of poor insignificant beings, formed to be subservient to his humour; and as to learning, it was so troublesome to acquire, and he had already so many advantages from fortune, that he foolishly concluded it was unnecessary to give himself much concern about it. He had masters to teach him to dance, fence, and jabber French; and had acquired a genteel address without knowing a syllable of grammar, latin, greek, or how to express himself with elegance in his native language. The only books he had ever read, were a parcel of trifling and flippant performances; a few plays,
and

and improbable stories, that had served to mislead his mind, and corrupt his morals. He had heard of religion, but it was only to hear it ridiculed by his gay companions; for Sir Henry and Lady Alford had been too much, and too anxiously engaged in the business and pleasures of this world, to think of the next; and too eager after obtaining wealth, to have any time to spare for implanting the precepts of truth in the youthful mind of their only son.

Lady Alford, whose very existence seemed to depend on that of her darling Edwin, was, at the time of their arrival at Myrtle Grove, looking out for a proper person to be taken into her own family, as tutor to this young and wayward exotic; and Sir Henry, de-

desirous as herself to have him under his own eye, readily gave way to the proposal of having him educated at home, where he would not fail being taught his own consequence, and be kept secure from forming any serious attachment derogatory to his, rank and the grandeur of his splendid expectations.

The arrival of these great folks, their numerous retinue of servants, the splendour of their equipage, the extravagance and voluptuousness of their manner of living, which were told with additions and exaggerations, furnished the whole village with sufficient subjects for conversation. One heard, that the bed in which Lady Alford slept, was decorated with a crescent of diamonds, and the curtains

or-

ornamented with festoons of pearls;—another, that the tables were solid gold, and the stoves silver, and that master Edwin was not suffered to walk a yard, but had a dozen black men to carry him to bed—or about the gardens—and that he never wore any but silk cloaths, trimmed with gold;—that his ruffles were point lace, that cost ten guineas a yard;—that their table was loaded with every rarity, and that they seldom dined without having thirty or forty different dishes.

Ellen heard all these accounts of luxury and magnificence with the greatest surprise, and she very seriously requested her father to preach one of his best sermons the Sunday following; not doubting that the great folks would all be at church, to thank heaven
for

for having bestowed so many blessings on them, and enabling them to make so many of their fellow creatures happy. Mr. Woodley shook his head, smiled at her innocence and simplicity, and promised to grant her request.

Ellen was at this period just turned of fifteen ; tall, and elegantly formed ; every limb proportioned to the exactest rules of symmetry. It was impossible, a figure so particularly captivating, could even in this obscure village remain unnoticed. She was the toast at every rural meeting, and the pride of the little hamlet she inhabited ; but having been brought up in almost a total ignorance of the customs and manners of the great world, and never exposed to the dangers of flattery,

tery, she knew no more of her beauty than what her looking glass had discovered to her, and to that she had paid but little attention; for she had been told by her good father (who she was certain never deceived any one) that beauty was the most dangerous possession to her sex, unless accompanied by humility, modesty, and the most guarded circumspection;—and that all its graces withered, the instant either pride or affectation took possession of the mind;—pride being the offspring of ignorance, and “*affectation* certain deformity.”

When the Sunday morning arrived that Ellen was to accompany her father to his parish church, to which the tinkling of two bells summoned them to repair, she took rather more
than

than usual pains in decorating herself in her very best finery; and actually changed the green ribbon which was upon her straw hat, for one of light blue, which had been given her by a distant relation who paid a visit to her father once a year. She thought, perhaps, the great people might condescend to notice her, as she doubted not but they would be charmed with her dear father's admirable precepts, and much edified by his sermon.

But, alas ! on arriving rather later than usual at the church, and waiting some time when there, how great was her disappointment at finding only five or six of the inferior servants made their appearance ; who, on being asked by some of the honest rustics, whether Sir Henry and his Lady meant to be
at

at church, that they might desire their rector to wait till they arrived before he began the service, they burst out into a hearty laugh at the ignorance and stupidity of the people; adding, that neither Sir Henry or Lady Alford would be out of their beds till long after the morning service was ended; and as to the Sunday afternoon, they generally spent it at cards or billiards, going to church being reckoned very unfashionable, and a very unnecessary piece of business, or a kind of punishment amongst people of fashion.

Mr. Woodley was silent, and not much surprized, but Ellen's astonishment was beyond the power of words to describe; and though she did all in her power to attend as usual to her father's excellent admonitions, delivered

with energy in the sublime language of truth and affection, she could only think what a very hard thing it was to be so rich and great, as to consider going to church and serving God a punishment; and she prayed with the utmost fervency, that she never might be guilty of such wickedness and ingratitude. She determined however to enquire of her father, as soon as she arrived at her own house, whether he really thought it possible, there could be people so insensible to the boundless mercies of that God, to whom he had ever been so dutiful and grateful in a life of obscurity and in a state of comparative poverty.

She no longer wished to see such strange great folks, whose avowed disregard to the duties of religion, had
in

in her opinion rendered them obnoxious and dangerous to society; and she thought, in the first moments of her resentment at being so unexpectedly disappointed, it would be almost a crime to go into a house, however grand and splendidly furnished, where the master and mistress of it could play at cards on the Sunday.

C H A P. III.

THE next day an uncommon rapping at Mr. Woodley's door alarmed the whole family. A noise so unusual, led them to apprehend something very dreadful must have happened to the person who appeared in so violent a hurry to obtain admittance. Ellen flew to open the door, but pale and trembling, when a servant, in a rich livery, presented a card to her. It contained an invitation

tion from Sir Henry and Lady Alford, to Mr. and Miss Woodley, to dine with them the following day. The invitation was accepted, and Ellen was thrown into a second consternation, at the thoughts of being so soon to appear before such great personages.

From the moment this unlooked for invitation arrived, Ellen could talk of nothing else but going to Myrtle Grove. Mrs. Spencer, Mr. Woodley's worthy house-keeper, was consulted respecting the important article of dress. She promised her young lady to give her advice and assistance, Mr. Woodley having previously insisted, that only neatness and simplicity should be observed, without the least attempt to alter her usual manner

of dressing; hinting, that he had not one guinea to spare for any additional finery, and, that he never wished his dear girl to appear in any circle above the humble but peaceful and happy situation in which providence had kindly placed her.

A muffin gown, white as the new fallen snow, and spotless as her own snowy bosom, was the best dress Ellen's little wardrobe afforded, and seemed best calculated by its neatness and simplicity, to set off her elegant form to advantage;—a large plain cap appeared enviously to shade a part of her lovely face, and concealed a profusion of auburn ringlets, that were artlessly disposed,—and a sash of the same coloured ribbon as that she had worn

worn on the Sunday upon her straw hat, was the whole of her finery.

Lady Alford sent her own coach for her humble visitors; and when Ellen, surrounded by two or three footmen, and many of her curious neighbours, (who were brought out to look at the splendid equipage) was handed by her venerable father into the carriage, her heart fluttered with a mixture of fear and delight, and her whole frame was agitated. Mr. Woodley took no notice of her confusion; but talked wholly on indifferent subjects till they arrived at the grove.

As my readers may probably wish to know how it happened that Mr. Woodley was honoured with so early and unexpected an invitation, I think it

right to inform them, it had been given in consequence of Lady Alford's hearing from some of her country visitors, a most respectable, pleasing, and interesting character of Mr. Woodley, which made her impatient to see him; and having likewise learnt from the same quarter, that notwithstanding his shining abilities, numerous virtues, and acknowledged worth, he was in rather low and distressing circumstances, she determined, if he answered the description which had been given of him, to prevail upon Sir Henry to make him a proposal of becoming tutor to her son; not doubting but he would gladly accept the offer, and consent to reside in their family.

When Mr. Woodley and his daughter arrived at Myrtle Grove, they

they were conducted through a number of elegant apartments, into a very superb drawing room; which exhibited such a striking scene of Eastern splendour, united with English taste and magnificence, as struck the delighted Ellen with the most pleasing surprise. The paper was India, the ceiling painted by Rebecca, in a most singular, captivating, and masterly stile; and the furniture a mixture of the modern and antique. The immense china jars, the gilded ornaments, the richness of the curtains, alternately engaged her attention, and excited her admiration.

Sir Henry and his Lady received their visitors with the utmost freedom, affability, good humour, and respect. Lady Alford was struck with the

C 5. beauty

beauty of Ellen, and charmed with the venerable placidness and interesting appearance of her father; who entered into conversation with his usual ease and unreserve, unawed by the splendour with which he was surrounded, or the consequence of those personages he addressed. Her Ladyship, after conversing familiarly with Ellen, enquiring how she spent her time, by whom she had been educated, where she had acquired so many accomplishments, and so much graceful elegance, in so retired a corner of the world, sent a message to request her son would join the party in the drawing room.

In about half an hour the young gentleman condescended to obey the summons. Though Ellen had been
struck

struck with surprize at the novelty of every thing around her on her first entrance, she was, if possible, a thousand times more astonished, when Mr. Alford made his appearance; and presented to her view a tall, meagre figure, pale as death, leaning on the shoulder of his valet de chambre, and crawling into the room upon a pair of legs that seemed scarcely able to support the weight of his languid and emaciated body. Over a waistcoat, bound with lace, he wore a kind of loose vest, made of Indian silk, richly ornamented with foil, and tied with a most beautiful sash of silver muslin ;—his hair was dressed in a most extravagant and uncommon style ;—a huge muff hung on one arm, and a footman followed him into the room, with a spaniel resting on a velvet cushion.

cushion,—it was with the greatest difficulty Ellen refrained from laughing.

“My dear Edwin,” said Lady Alford, addressing him on his entrance, “you are very late to day; I began to fear you were not well.”

“I am as well as ever I shall be in this uncertain weather, I believe, Madam. My being so late was owing to that impertinent, prating fool, Desleldernier, and that infernal dog, Rouge; the one with his French, and the other with his curling irons, have nearly tortured me to madness. Iago too has distressed me infinitely; the black rascal has actually let the parroquet escape, with his diamond collar about his neck, as he was given to me by the Nabob of Orde. I don’t believe

believe I shall recover the provoking incidents of this morning during the next twelve months. This cold and freezing climate, with its confounded changes, absolutely destroys me. I only attempted to take a few turns in the grove of laurels, and I have felt as if I had ten thousand agues ever since."

Ellen was again tempted to laugh, and secretly thanked heaven, her situation never exposed her to such ridiculous distresses.

As soon as Sir Henry Alford found his son had finished entertaining the company with this strange account of his morning's disasters, he introduced him to Mr. and Miss Woodley; to whom he paid his compliments with more composure and politeness than could have been expected, after the unpleasant

unpleasant specimen he had given of his humour at his first entrance. Some more company soon arrived, and the day was spent very agreeably.

The dinner was composed of every rarity our own climate could produce, or that money could procure from that of other countries. But Mr. Woodley was nearly as much distressed as his daughter, to make choice of any one dish that he could call by its name; so much were they disguised by the ingenuity of a foreign cook. A piece of English roast beef that was fortunately placed upon the side-board, relieved them from this temporary distress; and it was not in the power

power of the polite and hospitable pair to persuade their unfashionable guests to taste of any other dish. They dined so very late, that Ellen, after she arrived at her own house, told Mrs. Spencer, that she felt as if she had drank tea, after getting her supper.

When dinner was ended, cards were introduced, to which the whole company sat down, Mr. Woodley and his daughter excepted; who begged to be excused, not knowing either whist, quadrille, or indeed any other game. This was another scene of novelty and surprise to both Ellen and her father; and the change it produced, by the effect it had on the tempers of the party, a fresh source of wonder. As the stake for which they played.

played was high, the effect was soon visible; and distress or exultation might be traced on their different countenances. The Alford family, indeed, played with ease and polite indifference; and having a profusion of money, lost, without parting with their good humour.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

WHEN the hour of separation arrived, Sir Henry told Mr. Woodley, he should very soon call upon him at the parsonage; and Lady Alford requested Ellen to let her see her often at Myrtle-Grove. In this request she was seconded by her son, who, as soon as they were gone, declared, that Miss Woodley was the prettiest rustic he had seen on this side the atlantick, notwithstanding her ruddy

ruddy cheek, unfashionable modesty, and downcast eye; which, though averted, threatened mischief to his unfortunate sex: adding, that he did not suppose, that fierce, untamed tyger, Hyder Ally, had a prettier slave in his whole seraglio. These curious observations the company laughed at, and *admired* prodigiously.

In a few days Sir Henry Alford called upon Mr. Woodley, and without much preface proposed his becoming tutor to his son; making him very liberal offers to undertake that important charge. Mr. Woodley was at first unwilling to promise; he requested a little time to consider upon the subject; but would on no account consent to leave his own humble dwelling, or to send his daughter to
any

any of the public schools. After talking over the matter some time with Sir Henry, who was importunate to gain his purpose, it was agreed, that the young gentleman should spend five or six hours every day, at the parsonage, provided Lady Alford had no objection to that mode of proceeding. But Mr. Woodley very freely informed Sir Henry, that unless he had permission to rectify, by his authority and advice, whatever he saw wrong in the temper and disposition of his pupil, he must beg leave to decline the honour intended him; frankly telling him, that from what he had seen of the young gentleman, he thought a life of more activity, and fewer indulgencies, would not only tend to the improvement of his mind and temper, but in all probability

bability mend and strengthen his constitution.

Sir Henry, who had seldom heard the language of truth since he had been the envied favourite of fortune, especially when he was in the humour to bestow favours, was pleased with the sincerity and frankness of his truly respectable neighbour; and secretly sighed, that he had not always practiced the same integrity. He shook hands with Mr. Woodley at parting, and declared he should be happy if he could prevail upon his Lady to send his son wholly to reside with him, that he might learn wisdom in the sacred mansion of innocence and truth; and assured him that he should have his authority for liberty.

and

and power to direct both the conduct and studies of his son.

Lady Alford readily came into Mr. Woodley's terms, though she had much rather have had him reside in her own house. In a few weeks this good man began the irksome and unpleasant task of correcting, in order to improve, an unruly, obstinate, and haughty youth, whose imperious will and untamed spirit, had ruled in his father's house with uncontrouled power; and whose wayward temper, and obstinate disposition were so unpromising, as to make him almost despair of succeeding to his wishes, — pride, though the most absurd, being the most difficult to eradicate.

Of

Of all the causes which conspire to blind
Man's erring judgment, and misguide the mind,
What the weak head with strongest bias rules,
Is pride, the never failing vice of fools.
Whatever nature has in worth deny'd,
She gives in large recruits of needless pride!
For, as in bodies, thus in souls we find
What wants in blood, and spirits swell'd with wind,
Pride, where wit fails, steps in to our defence,
And fills up all the mighty void of sense.
If once right reason drive that cloud away,
Truth breaks upon us with resistless day.
Trust not yourself; but, your defects to know,
Make use of every friend---and ev'ry foe.

POPE.

At first, the young gentleman
visited his new tutor with unfeigned
reluctance. Haughtiness and discontent
were visible in his countenance.
He secretly despised the instructions
he received; and took every opportunity
to ridicule the sanctity of his
preceptor. He went and returned in
his

his carriage, and waited with the utmost impatience 'till those hours, set apart for study and improvement were ended; but finding his father and mother more resolute in their determination, respecting his constant attendance at Mr. Woodley's, than he had ever known them on any former occasion, he made a merit of necessity, and submitted to obey them with dissembled cheerfulness;—but privately vented his ill humour and cruelty on those unfortunate domestics, who were so unhappy as to be kept for his peculiar service; many of whom, being brought from India for that purpose, were obliged to submit to a worse than Egyptian bondage; and were often heard to declare, they would have preferred a state of slavery in their own country. Several of
them

them made their complaints to Mr. Woodley, and requested, with tears, that he would endeavour to teach Master Edwin humanity and good humour.

Ellen at first was very shy of Edwin, and most truly disliked him; but from being accustomed to receive many of her lessons at the same time that her father was instructing his pupil, her shyness and reserve gradually wore off. Her dislike however encreased. The violence of his passions terrified her gentle spirit; and her generous and feeling heart revolted against his inhuman cruelty, haughty and merciless disposition.

She once saw him beat a black servant, for not being able to climb a tree,

tree, in order to get him a young hawk, which he meant to destroy. Another time she was witness to his setting his dogs to worry a farmer's cat; and notwithstanding all her cries and entreaties, he suffered them to hunt and tear the poor harmless creature to death. To destroy birds, badgers, cats, dogs, the innocent lamb, and a number of other inoffensive animals, was a favourite amusement to this wayward child of fortune. Ellen, who detested cruelty, and lost all fear of offending, in her desire to preserve her harmless favourites from destruction, resolutely told him, that if she ever saw him destroy any more of them she would certainly acquaint her father, and never again assist him to get through with any of his lessons; adding, that she trembled lest he

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should, in one of his cruel humours, destroy any of her feathered favourites; and concluded with vowing that Darling, (the name of her green linnet,) should never perch on his shoulder again.

By persuasion, some jocular and good humoured sarcasms, some gentle admonitions on the folly of sacrificing health to external appearances, Mr. Woodley in a little time prevailed upon his pupil to use his legs; and to try what effect manual exercise would have on his constitution, by sometimes playing at cricket, or bowls, &c. &c. and by coming to the parsonage without the incumbrance of a carriage, and so many useless attendants. He next prevailed upon him to dress in plainer cloaths, and to become more conformable to the customs

toms and manners of his native country. He assured him, that wealth would not procure him the respect of the virtuous, unless his character was amiable, and his manners those of the gentleman. This advice was at first very unpleasant to the vitiated taste, pampered appetite, and vindictive spirit of the young gentleman; but Mr. Woodley trusted, that perseverance on his part, observation, and a little more experience on the part of his pupil, would do much, and timely convince him of the wisdom and necessity of following his advice; which he generally concluded with telling him, "that whilst title and ancestry rendered a good man more illustrious, they served to make a bad one more contemptible,"—vice being infamous, though in a prince; and virtue honourable in the meanest peasant.

Edwin was originally of a good disposition ; but his temper had been spoiled by servile flatterers, and the pernicious influence of bad example. His understanding was naturally good, but for want of early attention being paid to its improvement, it had degenerated into weakness; and been so misled by pride and folly, that it was nearly rendered useless. His taste was frivolous, his temper fretful and peevish. Mr. Woodley, with that probity and sincerity which had ever marked his character, informed Sir Henry and Lady Alford of the failings and errors which he saw in the conduct of his pupil; and was gratified and happy to find, his openness and sincerity met their united approbation. In fact, they both began to feel the absolute necessity

sity of not loosing any longer time; and from some specimens which they had seen of the wayward disposition of their son, they also began to fear that the wealth they had run such hazards, and gone such unwarrantable lengths to obtain, would neither make him a happy man, or a respectable character, unless some alteration could be made in his disposition: and from the corroding anguish which at times took possession of the mind of Sir Henry Alford, they were from experience convinced, that happiness was not always to be found in the habitation of splendour, or contentment purchased by lacks of rupees.

CHAP. V.

MR. Woodley frequently received the most flattering accounts of Valentine, who was making a rapid progress in his studies, at the great seminary of learning in which he was placed; and Ellen's heart was often gratified with the most tender and affectionate letters from her brother, who took every opportunity of writing. About this time, he arrived to spend the long vacation at his

his father's. He was introduced to Sir Henry and Lady Alford, who were charmed with the young man, at the very moment they were mortified at the striking contrast they observed between him and their son. Edwin was much pleased with Valentine, and he, knowing the great advantage it would be to his father and sister to keep up so desirable a connection, endeavoured, as much as possible, to ingratiate himself into the young gentleman's good graces. Mr. Woodley found a very useful assistant in Valentine. His arrival and visible superiority in every mental accomplishment, and the advantages he possessed in conversation, when any subject of consequence was started, first gave rise to emulation, and a desire of knowledge in the mind of Edwin. The strength

of the former's understanding, his amiable qualities, and the reputation he had gained, fortunately made the latter desirous of being more like him; and the praises which he repeatedly heard bestowed on his friend, stimulated him to follow his example, and made him heartily repent his long and obstinate inattention to study. He therefore earnestly set about regaining the time he had lost, and very soon began to make a better and quicker progress in his studies; and to have a high relish for the beauties of our English Poets, of whom he was particularly fond.

Ellen
Valentine and ~~Edwin~~ received more frequently than ever, invitations to the grove, and were presented with a great number of genteel and valuable presents.

sents. Ellen was upon every occasion particularly noticed by Lady Alford, from whose generosity her wardrobe had received considerable additions. But Mr. Woodley had secretly requested her Ladyship, that all expensive ornaments might be omitted by her bounty, as they were improper for his daughter to wear in her present situation; and might tend to render her unfit for that which it was most probable would attend her in future. He well knew that dress had dangerous attractions in the mind of a young girl, and would not fail to excite envy in those of his youthful parishioners.

D 5 Lady

Lady Alford had furnished Ellen with an elegant collection of well chosen books, amongst which were her admired Shakespeare, and beloved Pope, of whom her Ladyship had heard her fair friend speakin the most rapturous terms.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

MATTERS went on thus pleasantly for more than twelve months. Valentine continued improving in knowledge; and was as much the object of universal esteem, for honour, sobriety, and integrity, as for his acknowledged merit as a scholar and a gentleman. He was a general favourite amongst his brother collegians, and had received a promise from the son of a popular duke, that
the

the first living he had to bestow he would give to his friend Valentine. Sir Henry and Lady Alford thought themselves particularly fortunate in having placed their son under the watchful care of so worthy a preceptor. They now sometimes condescended to go to their parish-church; and had such an unfeigned respect for the character and well known piety of Mr. Woodley, as never to propose playing at cards on the Sunday, when either he or any of his family were present.

They often went to London; but as they could never prevail on Mr. Woodley to accompany them, they stayed but a short time, and frequently left Edwin at home, that he might not
lose

lose the advantage of his tutor's instructions.

“What sculpture is to a block of marble, education is to the human mind.” Edwin was now as fond, as desirous of being at Mr. Woodley's, as he had once been averse to going. In fact, he chiefly resided there; and much oftener dined at the frugal board of his worthy tutor, than at his own splendid and luxurious table; and partook of his simple and healthy repast, with a relish and satisfaction not to be described. Though no delicacies or rarities were placed upon the table, cheerfulness, good humour, and content were never wanting. They gathered their own little desert; and Edwin declared the fruit had a higher flavour than any which his father's hot-house could

could produce. The young gentleman was now become active, vigorous, and averse to ceremony; indifferent to shew, and disgusted with parade. He was now humane, good humoured, and ever ready to relieve distress. He no longer treated his servants like slaves, but fellow creatures that had the same wants, feelings, and infirmities as himself. He was easy of access; his dress, though genteel, was plain, and unadorned; all his amusements were innocent. He was likewise observing of religious duties, and seldom could be prevailed upon to absent himself from church; and when there, he listened with attention to the prevailing precepts of his venerable instructor, whom he now looked up to with respect, and loved for his virtues. His parents observed
this

this pleasing alteration in his temper and manners with grateful delight; and every domestic in the family blest the day in which Mr. Woodley undertook the charge of their young master.

Ellen, too, was now as much pleased with her companion as she had once seriously disliked him; and the favours and flattering attentions she daily received on his account, not only claimed her gratitude, but entitled him to her respect and attention.

When any little festivity was to be celebrated in the village, Ellen and Edwin were the king and queen of the joyous party. They enlivened the scene by their presence, and joined in the rural dance; infomuch, that some
of

of the good old dames began to tell, by presentiments profound, that they foresaw how it would end—the sweet, the lovely pair were undoubtedly formed for each other. But this was only whispered as a most important secret.

Ellen Woodley was beauty in its loveliest and most interesting form. The damask blush of timid modesty often adorned the cheek, on which the fainter rose of health, and the fair tints of virgin innocence, appeared in their most captivating colours. She was lively, active, and cheerful as the birds of spring; gentle as the breeze of May; fair as the lily, when first it peeps from earth, un sullied by the sun, uninjured by a storm.

A

A native grace

Sat fair proportion'd on her polish'd limbs,
Veil'd in a simple robe, their best attire,
Beyond the pomp of dress; for loveliness
Needs not the foreign aid of ornament,
But is, when unadorn'd, adorn'd the most.
Thoughtless of beauty, she was beauty's self;
Her form was fresher than the morning rose,
When the dew wets its leaves; unstain'd and pure,
As is the lily on the mountain snow.
The modest virtues mingled in her eyes,
Still on the ground dejected, darting all
Their humid beams into the blooming flow'rs,

At length this scene of pure and peaceful happiness was interrupted. Edwin on a sudden lost all his cheerfulness;—his health declined;—his emulation ended. His parents were alarmed, Mr. Woodley uneasy, and Valentine distressed at observing the alteration in his friend. Ellen, too, was restless and disturbed; she could not sleep,—could not help being alarmed lest poor Edwin should die.—

She

She often wept in secret ; and thought it would be very hard, if that harsh and unfeeling tyrant, death, should deprive Sir Henry and Lady Alford of their only son,—a son, that was now so good and amiable. In this state of painful suspense they remained some time. Physicians were called in to attend Mr. Alford ; but they declared it was not in their power to tell from what cause the young gentleman's disorder originated ; for he had neither cold, cough, sickness, or fever. He owned no bodily complaint, felt no pain, or would acknowledge none ; yet he wasted, looked pale, was languid, and had lost all his vivacity ; all therefore that the physicians recommended was air, exercise, bathing, and a regimen of plain and simple diet. Sir Henry and Lady Alford proposed

proposed taking him to Bath ; but he declared he should die if they carried him there, unless they took the village and its inhabitants with them. This unwillingness to leave retirement surprised his parents ; but as Edwin at this time did not know the nature of his disorder, it was not very likely that other people should easily discover it. —Neither was it possible for them to suppose, that a young man, who had such splendid expectations, one too who had given such repeated proofs of inheriting the ambitious spirit of his parents, should ever condescend to degrade himself, and disappoint all their flattering hopes, by falling in love with a little obscure country girl.

CHAP.

C H A P. VII.

MR S. Spencer, whose penetrating and watchful eye had been more observing than the less experienced and unsuspicious eyes of those with whom she lived, had for some time observed the behaviour of Edwin with particular attention ; and watched him so carefully, whenever she was called upon to attend him and her young lady in any of her rural walks, that none of their looks or actions

actions escaped her observation. Ellen having no female friend in the village whose situation afforded leisure for walking or making little excursions, Mrs. Spencer was often deputed by Mr. Woodley, to accompany his daughter, when he was otherwise engaged, or confined by indisposition. At those times she discovered a secret which she determined not to betray, lest by so doing she should occasion mischief, by distressing her young lady, and rob her good and exemplary master of his patron and benefactor; whose liberality had produced so agreeable a change in his situation and affairs, by enabling him to support his dear and amiable son genteely at Cambridge, and likewise had so delightfully increased his own power of
doing

doing good, and relieving the distresses of many of his humble parishioners.

The only son of Mr. Dennison, the good and friendly farmer who had so generously supplied Mr. Woodley with a sum of money to enable him to send Valentine to Cambridge, had long beheld the lovely daughter of his worthy rector with the partial eyes of love; he had told his father of his affection for Ellen, and his desire to make her his wife. Mr. Dennison, on being made acquainted with his son's wishes, made overtures to Mr. Woodley, that an union might take place between their children, and generously proposed making the best provision for them in his power; the want of fortune on the part of the young lady being no objection, as the fair

fair object of his son's regard was so good and amiable.

Mr. Woodley, who wished to see his daughter happily married, and comfortably settled in the world during his own life, had not on his part a single objection. Mr. Dennison was in easy, though not affluent circumstances; he and Mr. Woodley had long been friends. The young man proposed as a lover for Ellen had an irreproachable character; he therefore readily gave his free consent, that the youth should be permitted to plead his own cause, and, if he succeeded in gaining the affections of his daughter, promised he should meet with no difficulty in obtaining his consent.

Ac-

Accordingly, young Dennison had frequent opportunities given him of being with the fair Ellen. This matter, therefore, could not long remain a secret either in the family of Mr. Woodley, or in the village. Every body agreed in their opinion that it would be a good match for Ellen. It was talked over by the family at the grove; Lady Alford thought it would do very well; and promised, if matters were brought about, she would present her young friend with her wedding cloaths.

It had been observed by Mrs. Spencer (and by her only) that from the time this match had been talked of, the alteration in Mr. Alford had taken place; and that he always abruptly took his leave, as soon as young Dennison

nison made his appearance in their little parties ; and that he never attempted walking with her young lady, when he accompanied her. This had not entirely escaped the observation of Valentine, who was at home when these overtures on the part of Mr. Denison, had been made in regard to his sister ; but he imputed it to some little remains of pride, and therefore thought it best to let it pass unnoticed.

True love is ever diffident. After some struggles, and a few encouraging conversations with his father on the interesting subject, the young farmer acquired sufficient courage to make an open and free confession of his passion. Ellen, who knew nothing of Mr. Denison's application to her father, nor

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E

had

had received the least hint from her own family on the subject, (they having determined to leave her entirely to act as she pleased in a matter in which her happiness was so materially concerned) was struck speechless with surprise and astonishment ; she being in reality almost the only person in her own family, or the village, unacquainted with the length and sincerity of Frederick Dennison's attachment. 'Tis true, she had observed, that he took every opportunity of being with her, and had been a more frequent guest than usual at the parsonage ; but they had been friends and neighbours from their childhood, and every body, she thought, was more attentive and obliging to her than she deserved. She had always liked the young man as a friend, but as a lover

lover the case was widely different ;— he was not half so agreeable as she supposed a lover ought to be ;—he was so rough and unpolished in his manners and expressions,—so robust, awkward, and clumsy in his figure,—in fact, he was altogether so unlike the being which in her opinion was formed to teach her heart to love, that she thought it but just to put a final end to his hopes at once.

As soon, therefore, as she recovered the use of speech, she frankly declared her sentiments,—that as a lover she could never be prevailed upon to listen to him; but as a friend she should ever respect and regard him: and concluded with earnestly entreating that he would never again attempt talking to her on a subject she wished not to

hear from the lips of any one till she was some years older. The young man withdrew in silent discontent, much mortified and hurt by her peremptory refusal.

Ellen, the moment she was certain he had left the house, ran to inform her father what had happened to surprise and distress her; little suspecting that he himself had so long been let into the secret, and had been a party concerned. She told him that she never, indeed, she never could love Frederick Dennison, though he might be, and she really thought he was, a very good young man. 'She was very sorry if she had given him any pain, or had offended him, but she was determined not to leave her
dear

dear father, and her beloved Valentine. She was happy, very happy;—it was cruel in any one to attempt making her otherwife;—for her part, she would not for many, many years, be a wife, no, not to the finest gentleman in the world.

Mr. Woodley, though rather hurt and disappointed by his daughter's determined refusal, and the dislike which she expressed to receiving the addresses of his generous and friendly neighbour, assured her with the utmost tenderness that he would never attempt to influence her in the choice of a husband. He wished she could have liked young Dennison; but as she could not, he would under-

take to put a final end to the young man's hopes. Accordingly he did so, and the matter dropt;—and what may appear very surprising, Edwin soon recovered, and was more lively, pleasing, and entertaining than ever.

C H A P.

C H A P. VIII.

ALL this did not escape the watchful observation of the experienced Mrs. Spencer; nor did she fail at the same time to remark, that her young lady had been particularly attentive to Mr. Alford during his long and alarming indisposition; that she looked pale, and had often shed tears on his account; and expressed the most lively transports of joy, when hopes were given by the faculty

E 4

that

that he would soon get perfectly well again.

By this time it will clearly appear to the reader, that a mutual passion had taken place in the bosoms of Edwin and Ellen. It had long been planted there by the subtle God, who delights in hood-winked mischief; it had grown with their growth, and strengthened with their strength. But Edwin knew not to what a degree he loved, 'till he feared a rival would rob him of his dearest treasure, —his charming Ellen. Not even yet did the gentle fair one suspect that she had any other regard for Edwin than she had for her brother Valentine; he was her second brother, and in her opinion she ought to love him, not only for his own merits,
good

good qualities, and the sincerity of his attachment to her, but for the numerous favours she and her whole family had received on his account.

Edwin was indeed become a most charming and accomplished young man; graceful and pleasing both in his person and in his manners. He was now humble, good humoured, benevolent, and unassuming as Ellen was herself;—no longer harsh, rude, overbearing, and haughty to his dependants. He would not even hurt a worm, lest Ellen, the gentle, the lovely Ellen, should think him cruel and unfeeling. He admired that sweet Poet above all others, who in one of his beautiful and elegant pastorals, had so particularly described his own present feelings, and at the

same time pourtrayed, in the description of his fair one's disposition, that of the still fairer Ellen Woodley.

I have found out a gift for my fair ;
I have found where the wood-pigeons breed :
But let me that plunder forbear,
She will say 'twas a barbarous deed.

For he ne'er could be true, she aver'd,
Who could rob a poor bird of its young :
And I lov'd her the more when I heard
Such tenderness fall from her tongue.

I have heard her with sweetness unfold
How that pity was due to a dove :
That it ever attended the bold,
And she call'd it the sister of love.

But her words such a pleasure convey,
So much I her accents adore ;
Let her speak, and whatever she say,
Methinks I should love her the more.

Nor was the taste and disposition
of Edwin less observed by the artless
and unsuspecting Ellen. Lady Alford
had

had presented her with a piece of pale pink silk for a fancy dress, which she insisted on her wearing on the birth day of her son, which was to be celebrated in their charming arcadia, with a rural festival. The colour had been chosen by Edwin, and likewise a hat purchased for her on the same joyous occasion. This piece of intelligence, undesignedly betrayed by the parties, added much to the value of the present; and gave it, in the opinion of this fair child of beauty and simplicity, redoubled attractions.

Edwin had told her she looked best without a cap, and therefore her caps were almost entirely thrown aside. He admired the simple and artless manner in which she wore her hair, which
had

had never been adulterated by powder, or tortured into deformity by a hair dresser; and he now wore his own in the same natural and careless manner. If ever he disliked the colour of her ribbons, she either laid them aside or gave them to the servant, for Mr. Woodley had for some time been able to allow his daughter something genteel for dress; and had been obliged to consent, though much against his inclination, to her dressing in a more tasteful, expensive, and fashionable manner, in compliance with the request of Lady Alford, who pleaded the absolute necessity of that particular, on account of her being obliged to mix with so many genteel families when she visited at Myrtle-Grove.

One

One evening, Mr. Woodley having walked out whilst Edwin remained at the Parsonage, and the night proving so wet as to prevent their taking their walk as usual, the young people were at a loss how to amuse themselves 'till their accustomed hour of parting. At length they agreed to sit down to piquet, a game which Edwin had taught Ellen during the winter evenings. He enquired what stake they should play for. Ellen pleaded poverty, saying she had been of late so very extravagant, that she had no money she could conveniently spare to hazard at cards. "Suppose then," cried Edwin, "we play for hearts? I dare venture mine, if you will, after having won it, give me a fair chance of winning your's." Ellen blushed, she was strangely and
un-

unusually confused; it was a mighty odd and whimsical proposal of Mr. Alford's. However, she assented with a smile, declaring she was not such a coward as to refuse the challenge; assuring him, if she happened to be a winner, she would not attempt to keep more than one heart, because she had repeatedly been told they were troublesome and dangerous things, for young, inexperienced girls, like herself, to have any thing to do with; and if she happened to lose her own, she supposed he would be equally willing to return so inconsiderable a trifle. They sat down to cards, Edwin played carelessly, and gave his fair adversary every advantage, and Ellen was the winner; she likewise unfortunately won the second game, though her opponent
tried

tried his utmost skill to obtain the victory. He then declined any farther contest with the fair conqueror, threw up his cards, and made some humorous complaints of his ill success; vowing it was very hard to be deprived of a heart without being able to obtain one in return. Ellen, in the same ludicrous strain, assured him, she would scorn to take any advantage of his ill fortune, and therefore would readily give up all right to the prize she had so undesignedly won; advising him, however, as a friend, to be more cautious for the future, when he ventured to play, not to stake so valuable a treasure as his heart, lest it should fall into the hands of a more designing and less generous adversary, that might wish to hold captive, what he appeared so desirous

desirous to keep in a state of uncontrouled freedom.

Edwin was hurt both by her railery, and, as he thought, apparent indifference; he could not conceal that he was angry, and with some warmth told her, he had, he found, vainly cherished the flattering hopes of being admitted to her friendship, and of being almost as dear to her as her brother Valentine. But the sweet delusion was now ended! she had undeceived him, cruelly undeceived him! and that too at the time, the very time, he had almost determined to entrust her with a secret of the utmost importance to his happiness.—But he would—he must now—He could proceed no farther. Ellen was astonished and hurt; she saw she had offended,

fended, but she knew not how, or why she had done so. She was alarmed at his altered looks, and the strangeness of his behaviour; for he snatched up his hat, and instantly hurried out of the room, without even bidding her good night.

CHAP.

C H A P. IX.

ELLEN retired to her chamber and went to bed at her usual hour; but she could not sleep,—she could only think of Edwin's capriciousness;—his displeasure,—his cold and ungenteel manner of leaving her, were thorns to her repose;—then the secret he wanted to tell her,—she would have given the world to know what it could be.

The

The next morning Edwin arrived much earlier than usual at Mr. Woodley's; he eagerly availed himself of the first opportunity to apologize for his rudeness the preceding evening. "But, my dear girl," he cried, "you cannot wonder that I was both mortified and hurt, when you recollect what an inestimable prize ill fortune prevented my winning."

"You would have had much more reason to complain," replied Ellen, "had I, like a sordid gamester, wished to keep, or to have deprived you of a treasure on which you set so high a value; but as I agreed to give it you again, without a ransom, it was really very strange of you, Mr.

Mr. Alford, to put yourself so much out of humour."

Edwin saw that she either did not, or what was more probable, would not appear to understand him; he therefore resolutely determined to clear up the matter at once, and if possible discover what were her real sentiments respecting himself, and whether he had any reason to cherish hopes of his passion being likely to meet with a mutual return. "It was yourself, my dear Ellen," he exclaimed, (taking her hand,) "that made me for a moment angry,—but the instant I left you, all my resentment vanished; I would have given the world to have again returned, in order to have expiated my offence at your feet. It was not my ill success
at

at cards that I regarded, or in reality regretted. - Had you been as willing to retain a heart, as I was happy to lose one,—had you not with such cruel, such cold and careless indifference, offered to return what had long before been lost,—I should have rejoiced at your triumph, and been proud to own myself vanquished by so fair a conqueror;—you would not then have seen me out of temper.”

The matter was now fully explained, the secret was discovered, and poor Ellen, whilst her cheeks were covered with blushes, felt her heart agitated with a mixture of delight, fear, and surprise. Edwin saw and pitied her confusion;—he pressed her hand to his bosom, and gracefully putting one knee to the ground, declared he would not leave her ’till she had as-
sured

fured him of her forgiveness both of his first, and this his second offence. This request he easily obtained; for the trembling and affrighted Ellen was in the greatest terror, lest her father, or any of the family should come into the room and discover Mr. Alford kneeling at her feet.

From this painful yet pleasing moment, the lovely and inexperienced girl was no longer happy. In becoming acquainted with the flattering partiality of Edwin, she discovered the situation of her own heart; and a thousand tender recollections rushed upon her delighted imagination. To be beloved by Edwin was a pleasure so unexpected, an honour so unlooked for,—so much above what she had dared to expect,
or

or even to have hoped. He was all that was amiable in man,—a timorous figh, at the sound of which her cheeks were again suffused with a faint blush, acknowledged that she thought him so. But the next moment, stern recollection bade her remember who this Edwin, this captivating lover, was! She did so, and trembled at the picture which memory presented to her view. Edwin, the too amiable Edwin, whom her heart had dared to prefer, was the only son of Sir Henry Alford! a man who was rich, aspiring, proud, able to give his son a princely fortune, and no doubt but he was anxiously desirous of his marrying some fine lady, whose family and connexions would add to the dignity of his own. She next recollected, for the first time, with regret,

gret, her own humble situation ; and it instantly banished every flattering hope. She likewise knew how much her whole family were indebted to Sir Henry and Lady Alford, and that she herself had been particularly distinguished by their generosity ; and therefore, how ungrateful it would be in her to deceive them by listening to their son as a lover, or to encourage hopes which never could be realized ! Her soul shuddered at the idea of being ungrateful to such kind and generous friends, such noble benefactors ; she therefore prudently determined, if Mr. Alford ever again renewed a subject which had so much distressed and alarmed her, which had given rise to such delusive, yet foolish hopes, to obtain a promise from him, a solemn promise
of

of never repeating it; if he did, to tell her father of his attachment. Having settled this matter in her own mind, she became more composed; and for a few hours considered herself as no inconsiderable heroine.

Still she could think of nothing but Edwin;—she could not help wishing he had been a farmer's son, or more upon an equality with herself; because she then might have loved him without being guilty of a crime, —and not to love him, she considered as impossible. She knew that if his partiality to her was ever discovered, she should never see him more; and as the veil was now removed from her eyes and heart, she recollected a thousand tender proofs which he had given her of his regard,

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gard, and trembled with fearful apprehension, lest others should likewise have observed them. Alas! she had but too much reason for these alarming fears; for the storm was near bursting on her defenceless head, before she had seen one cloud arise. For some weeks Ellen avoided, as much as possible, being left alone with Mr. Alford; she never attempted to walk, unless her father proposed being of the party; and the instant he left the room she made some pretence or other for following him; and whenever she went to Myrtle-Grove, she never left Lady Alford for a moment. If Edwin, at any time particularly addressed himself to her, she blushed with terror and confusion; and on his once attempting to detain her a few moments in the garden,

garden, she burst into a flood of tears.

This alteration in the behaviour and conduct of Ellen, alarmed and mortified her lover. He was now satisfied she hated and despised him; her whole behaviour convinced him he was the object of her dislike and aversion. She would not even look at him; and though she could smile on every other person, she never smiled on him; and the gentlest touch of his hand appeared to have the same effect upon her as if she was in danger of being bit by some poisonous animal.

With all these jarring conflicts, and the severe contest between his mortified pride and wounded love,

F 2

again

again he wasted,— again he looked ill, lost his cheerfulness, and his health declined ;—he again avoided company, fled to the bosom of solitude, and obstinately refused to be a partaker in any of the amusements going forward at the Grove, or in the Village. His parents were alarmed, Mr. Woodley distressed, and the fair Ellen's mind filled with ten thousand apprehensive miseries, tender distresses, and agonizing fears.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

AT length the whispers and suspicions which had long been circulated about the village and its environs, respecting the mutual attachment of the young lovers, which was but too visible to the prying eyes of curiosity, and the more penetrating ones of the envious (whose suspicions had been positively confirmed from the time

Ellen refused to accept the addresses of Frederick Dennison) reached the ears of Lady Alford.* The alarming, the disgusting, and unwelcome tale, was told her by one of those malicious and malevolent beings, who delight in doing mischief, with numberless falsehoods and exaggerations. It was asserted as an absolute fact, that Mr. Woodley must have seen, and given every encouragement to the growing passion of his pupil; and by pretending blindness, had assisted to draw his inexperienced youth into those toils his artful daughter had laid to ensnare him. Ellen was represented as vain, haughty and designing;—her giddy head had been turned by the favours she had undeservedly received;—and it must have been the aspiring hopes of drawing
Mr.

Mr. Alford into a clandestine marriage, that had led her to refuse so amiable a man as young Dennison, who was in every respect so much her superior.

Lady Alford was highly enraged, and mortified; she took the earliest opportunity to communicate the unpleasant intelligence to Sir Henry, who was equally irritated, and threatened horrid vengeance on the unsuspecting parties. Becoming more cool, they agreed that it would be best to watch the young couple very carefully, before they gave a hint of their suspicions; and if they found the tale was true, determine to separate the lovers, without giving them any time to settle matters for carrying on a correspondence,—or to lay any distant

F 4 plan,

plan, in order to counteract their designs.

It may here be a matter of great surprise to my young and inexperienced readers, that the innocent and unoffending Ellen, or her exemplary and truly benevolent father, should have an enemy so cruel as to wish them deprived of the friendship of Sir Henry and Lady Alford; whilst those who have seen more of the world will not be at a loss to account for the reason. Envy will level its baneful shafts at worth, however unassuming; and many there are to be found, who are more ready to weep with the unfortunate, than to rejoice in the prosperity of a neighbour or a friend. For, alas! there is a dark and detestable composition in the minds of too many
of

of our fellow creatures, whose highest pleasure consists in destroying the happiness and fair fame of others. Youth, innocence, and beauty, have often their secret enemies. Envy spares neither friend or foe; and excellence in any shape, or form, or situation, must expect to have the iron-dart of envy leveled against them to undermine their peace.

“What is this world?---Thy school, O misery!

“Our only lesson is to learn to suffer;

“And he who knows not that, was born for nothing.”

Whilst Sir Henry and Lady Alford were busied in making observations, every one of which served more to increase their suspicions, they took notice that Edwin would on no account omit going to Mr. Woodley's, let whatever company be at Myrtle-Grove. They likewise saw, with an indignation they found it difficult to

conceal, that he never appeared in spirits, or seemed to relish any of the pleasures going forward, unless Ellen and her father were present; or seldom joined in the conversation if they were not the subject. But whenever Ellen Woodley happened to be mentioned, his eyes sparkled with delight, and his whole frame appeared animated by his eagerness to praise the charming girl; then he could talk—ye gods, how he could talk! and he was often ready to exclaim in the soft language of Tancred, when talking to his Sigismunda,

Hear me, thou soul of all my hopes and wishes!
And witness, heaven! prime source of love and joy!
Not a whole warring world combin'd against me;
Its pride, its splendor, its imposing forms,
Nor interest, nor ambition, nor the face
Of solemn state, not even thy father's wisdom,
Shall ever shake my faith.

Al

All these striking testimonies of Mr. Alford's attachment to Miss Woodley, wrung the hearts of his parents with corroding anguish; and they secretly cursed the day in which they unfortunately placed him under the care of old Woodley.

During the time in which they were harrassing themselves with doubts and fears, and laying a thousand plans to separate the young people for ever, Ellen, as if she had been studying to gratify their wishes, avoided her lover with the utmost care; whilst he, wearied with suspense, and distracted with innumerable tender fears and jealous apprehensions, resolutely determined to avail himself of the first favourable

op-

opportunity, to make a free and more open declaration of his passion; and to know from her own lips, whether he really was so wretched as to have become the object of her hatred and aversion.

C H A P.

CHAP. XI.

CHANCE soon befriended the almost despairing youth; and ended a suspense which had for many weeks been intolerably painful to support in silence. Ellen, one evening, had stolen, as she supposed, unobserved by any of the family, into the arbour which her dear Valentine had reared in their days of playful happiness;

pinets; and which, since his departure from the village, had been ornamented with several little presents which had been sent by Edwin for that purpose. That very day, amongst some of Ellen's drawings, he had placed a miniature of himself; and very near one which Valentine had drawn of his sister. No sooner did Ellen see the dear, the well known portrait, than her heart acknowledged the present as the most valuable she had ever received. That very day she had been more cold, reserved, and cautious to avoid him than usual; she was struck with the reflection of having wounded the heart (by an appearance of ingratitude) that loved her with such generous sincerity. She stood looking for some moments with silent anguish at the representative of her beloved Edwin;

Edwin ; then exclaimed, "Dear incautious youth ! I wanted not this to remind me of one already too dear to a heart that owns you for its lord ; yet must never dare to encourage the sweet hope of long possessing your's ! No, too amiable Edwin, *you* were born to walk in the aspiring, the thorny paths of ambition *I* to, pass unnoticed by all but you in the humble vale of retired, unenvied life. For your sake, I wish I had been rich and great. Ah ! had I been a queen, my heart had owned no sovereign but you ; then, indeed, I might have cherished those sweet and pleasant hopes, which in poor Ellen Woodley it would be unpardonable to encourage ; and which it has already cost me a thousand tears to suppress and banish. Had you been

poor

poor as I am, it had not then been a crime to love. Yes, dear Edwin,

“ You prefer’d me

“ Above the maidens of my age and rank ;

“ Still shun’d their company, and still fought mine.”

“ I was not won by gifts ; yet still you gave ;

“ And all your gifts, tho’ small, yet spoke your love.

“ You pick’d the earliest strawberries in the woods,

“ The cluster’d filberts, and the purple grapes ;

“ You taught a prating slave to speak my name ;

“ And when you found a nest of nightingales,

“ Or callow linnets, you would shew ’em me,

“ And let me take ’em out.”

The manner and the attitude of Ellen, whilst repeating this little but interesting passage from the great Dryden, and the sweet but plaintive tone of her voice, which vibrated to the feelings of his heart, were beyond description charming ; they would have warmed and animated the cold unfeeling heart of an Anchorite.

Gues,

Guests, then, ye, who ever really loved, what must be their united effect on the care worn mind of the despairing Edwin! A gentle sigh, which reached the ear of Ellen, ended her soliloquy,— the sigh was Edwin's!—In hopes of meeting the coy and cruel fair one, as he had long unjustly called her, he had concealed himself and overheard all that had passed. When he found himself discovered, he flew from his hiding place, and threw himself at her feet; but unwilling to increase her confusion, snatched her snowy hand to his lips; without even venturing to look up to her face, and without appearing to have heard the soft confession she had so unexpectedly made of her partiality in his favour. “My dear, my lovely Ellen,” cried the enraptured youth, “have I met
with

with you at last ? and has kind fortune at length given me an opportunity, for which I have so long sighed, of enquiring why I am so detestable that you cannot bear me in your sight ?—why you hate me ?—and what I have done to offend, that I am so cruelly punished ?”

“ Indeed, Mr. Alford,” cried the confused and almost fainting Ellen, (yet charmed with the delicacy of her lover) “ indeed, I do not hate you ; it would be very ungrateful in me to hate or even dislike the son of my kind and generous benefactress. Alas ! I fear my unthinking folly”—

“ Fear nothing, dear Ellen, sweet innocence, loveliest, best of women !” exclaimed the now happy and transported

ported youth,—“have we not, in a manner, been brought up together?—have not our minds received instruction from the same revered tutor, whom you are so happy as to call father, and I too love as a second parent?—surely you ought to treat me with less reserve.—At this moment you appear afraid of me;—you wish to get away,—you look pale,—and tremble as if you repented having made the smallest confession in my favour.”

“Ah, no, no—you know too, too well, I do not hate you—but yet I ought to fear;—perhaps I ought to hate you for thus distressing me, thus tempting me to deviate from my duty to the best of parents.”

“Only.

“Only say you are determined to do so,” cried Edwin, with some little indignation,—“I will return to India; I will die rather than make you unhappy.—I am ill; I shall never be well again, unless you treat me with less rigor;—put some confidence in me, and be persuaded to rely on my sincerity. Why will you refuse to take hold of my arm, and call me your dear Edwin, as you used to do? I love you more than life, or wealth, or any thing this earth contains, my sweet Ellen; and when I come of age I will boldly avow my love to the whole world.—I will one day conduct you to the altar.—No other shall ever be the bride of thy faithful Edwin.”

“Oh! it must never, never be!”
 replied the blushing Ellen. “My
 father

father would never forgive me, was he ever to discover that I had listened to you on this dangerous subject. You must marry some more happy fair one that is rich or great. Sir Henry and Lady Alford would never suffer me to approach them any more, if they knew how you had degraded yourself, and disappointed them by talking to Ellen Woodley of love and marriage. You must not therefore, generous, and disinterested Edwin, repeat this subject; if you do, I shall be under the unpleasant necessity of acquainting my father with your love, and then I shall never see you more." A rising sigh prevented her proceeding, and a silent tear a second time betrayed what, she knew, her unguarded soliloquy had before revealed.

Edwin

Edwin saw this additional proof of her tenderness with inexpressible delight. He repeatedly requested her to assure him he was forgiven; and promised to obey her rigid injunctions to the utmost of his power, if she did not attempt to avoid him. But if she made use of that cruel method to prevent being told his love, he vowed he would not endeavour to conceal his passion from his parents, or the whole world, let the consequence be what it would.

Ellen, terrified at this threat, which she knew would not only rob her father and brother of their best friends, but forever separate her from her lover, (a trial she wanted resolution to support with fortitude) promised, that she would fly from him no more. Edwin having
ob-

obtained this important concession, and at the same time being convinced that he was beloved by Ellen, was at this moment the happiest of his sex. At present indeed he despaired of obtaining his parents consent to address the daughter of Mr. Woodley, as a lover; but his father might alter his sentiments, his mother might intercede for him, or a thousand things might happen to obtain his consent and bring about an union with the lovely girl, who had so undesignedly made him her captive; and whose artless and sweetly interesting soliloquy, tears, and blushes, had convinced him beyond a doubt, that he was inexpressibly dear to her heart, and that he had nothing to fear from a rival.

C H A P.

C H A P. XII.

A Few days after the above eclairs-
siffement had taken place be-
tween the lovers, Mr. Woodley and
his fair daughter were invited to
spend the day at Myrtle-Grove. The
afternoon being suitable for the
amusement, it was proposed by the
company, to fish on a fine piece of
water which ran meandering across
the bottom of a beautiful lawn.
Edwin baited Ellen's hooks, and
stood

stood by her side the whole time; and he even dared to whisper in her ear, in the presence of his parents, that he envied the fish which she ensnared, though they were sentenced to die for having been caught by her hand. He compared his own situation to theirs, and assured her that he would not endeavour to be free, though a fate similar to that of her innocent captives was to be his lot.

Sir Henry and Lady Alford observed the whole of their son's behaviour with silent but heart wounding indignation, and this ill fated afternoon, realized all their fears, and confirmed their suspicions; for Ellen having entangled her fishing line upon some shrubs that were planted by the side of the water, Edwin

stept rather too forward to disengage it and fell in. Ellen gave a piercing shriek, and instantly sunk lifeless into the arms of a gentleman who was standing near her when the accident happened. A general confusion prevailed. Sir Henry and his Lady lost every thought but for the safety of their son, who, before Ellen recovered, was brought to land by two servants, who had eagerly plunged into the water to save him.

After receiving the tender caresses of his parents, and the congratulations of the company, on his fortunate escape, he flew to Ellen, who was still too much terrified to be upon her guard, or to attempt making the painful effort of concealing her emotion, which her heart, and indeed

indeed her whole frame had suffered from the danger to which she had seen the dear object of her tenderest love exposed. Edwin, by this alarming accident, was equally incapable of caution, and rendered regardless of consequences. Seeing the situation to which her apprehensions on his account had reduced her, in the most soothing language he called upon her to speak, in order to relieve his agonizing fears. As soon as she opened her eyes she fixed them on her lover, and softly enquired if he really lived? A gentle pressure of her hand, and the sound of his voice assured her that he did; and with a look of inexpressible tenderness, he added, that he lived for her alone!—But he had time for no more!—He was hurried into the house, that his wet cloaths

might be taken off; and every proper method made use of that might prevent any disagreeable consequences from this unexpected plunge into the water.

By the anxious and positive commands of Lady Alford, Edwin was obliged to confine himself to his own apartment for the remaining part of the evening; he flattered himself, however, that the next day would afford him time and opportunity of thanking his dear Ellen for the tender anxiety she had felt on his account. His servant had informed him of Miss Woodley's having fainted as soon as she saw him fall into the water; and of the general confusion and distress which followed.

Mr:

Mr. Woodley, who had not been present at the time of the bustle, heard that his pupil had narrowly escaped being drowned; and that his daughter had been so terrified as to have had a fainting fit. He rejoiced at Edwin's fortunate escape,—was not the least surprised at his daughter's fright,—yet he had not a suspicion that any other than a kind of fraternal or friendly affection had been cherished by either of them. He went immediately to Edwin's chamber, sat with him some time, and then returned to his own house with Ellen.

Sir Henry and Lady Alford had seen enough to convince them, the tale they had heard was too true. They were astonished at their own
 G 3 blind.

blindness, and lamented their folly in having themselves thrown their son in the way of the fascinating Ellen. They took their resolutions accordingly; and cherished hopes, that time, aided by their endeavours, would do much in terminating this mean, improper, and, to them, mortifying connexion. They no longer doubted Mr. Woodley's having been privy to the whole of the lovers proceedings, and therefore were highly enraged against the good man whom they had so often and justly admired; and whose unaffected piety, and apparently blameless life, they had been almost taught to revere:—but whom they now hated, and threatened to discard without ever seeing more.

The

The next morning, Mr. Alford was unfortunately prevented going, as he had intended, to his worthy tutor's, by a fore throat and slight fever, which were occasioned by the cold he caught from his unfortunate fall into the water. Mr. Woodley, who had sent to make enquiries after his pupil, no sooner heard of his indisposition, than he went up to the Grove. Sir Henry and his Lady received him with the most distant and chilling coldness in their manner; but to avoid suspicion, and to prevent giving any alarm to their son, they did not attempt to prevent his going to visit him. Edwin was delighted at seeing his tutor,—made a thousand fond enquiries after Ellen,—said he was sorry he had frightened her so much the preceding day,—and

G 4

hoped

hoped that he should very soon see her, to apologize for the terror he had occasioned her. Mr. Woodley recommended him to take the utmost care of himself, and not to venture out too soon. He left the house without receiving an invitation to stay dinner, a circumstance very unusual;—nor did it escape his observation that neither Sir Henry or his Lady made a single enquiry after Ellen; but he supposed it was owing to the distress they were in on account of the indisposition of their son, and therefore he thought no more about it.

Ellen was alarmed and uneasy at Edwin's being ill; but as she had no one to whom she durst impart her fears, she was obliged to weep in secret,

cret, and to confine her sorrows to her own bosom. She felt an unusual weight upon her mind and spirits, accompanied with a timorous dread of something that would happen still farther to distress her; but as she knew not what that something was to be, or from what source it would originate, she feared it would create suspicion in the mind of her good father if she mentioned her despondency. She therefore endeavoured, as much as possible, to shake off her dejection; but had her countenance been carefully or suspiciously observed, it would have betrayed that all was not peace within, whilst the humiliating thought of having deviated from her duty, added a thousand additional pangs to her secret sorrow.

G 5

The

The next day Mr. Woodley contented himself with only sending to enquire after Mr. Alford;—the messenger was told he was much better; but as no invitation was given him to go to the Grove, he determined not to make his appearance there again 'till his company was requested. He now began to be a little surprised at the coldness of Sir Henry and his Lady the day preceding, and rather more so, that he had no invitation to the Grove, nor any thanks for his enquiries.

Mr. Woodley continued sending every day, for more than a week; at length his servant returned with intelligence that very much surprised him, and threw his daughter into the most alarming consternation. The whole

whole family had left Myrtle-Grove! —none of the servants that remained knew where they were gone, or when they meant to return. “Good God! my dear Sir,” exclaimed Ellen, “what can be the matter?—or what can be the reason you were not apprised of this hasty removal?” “I am as much as you, my dear child, at a loss to guess,” replied the good man, with his usual composure, “but I suppose it will, when they have leisure to write, be accounted for. Perhaps, something has happened, that demanded their immediate presence in Town.” “But,” returned Ellen, scarcely able to refrain from tears, “on these occasions they used to leave Edwin at home. Surely this behaviour is very strange.” “It is more strange of you, my dear, to sup-
pose,

pose, such great people will trouble themselves, to give any account of their actions, to such little and unimportant beings as we are. It will be very fortunate for us, if they should ever again recollect we had the honour of being known to them." Ellen could no longer restrain her tears. "And do you really suppose, my dear Sir, that if"—(here her sobs almost prevented her going on) "that if we never should see Mr. Alford again, he will be able to forget us?" "I hope not, Ellen; but if it should be so, we have no right to complain." —He withdrew to his study.

CHAP.

C H A P. XIII.

ELLEN's distress was inexpressible. What could be the occasion of this strange proceeding?—what could have happened?—After what had passed, she thought it was unjust, it was surely very cruel of Edwin not to bid her farewell. She had lamented the absence of her brother Valentine when he went to Cambridge; but she did not long continue inconsolable. She now felt
very

very different anguish. Valentine was to return at a certain period ; but Edwin, her dear Edwin, she should never see him more. Such were the gloomy apprehensions which had taken possession of her mind. She retired, wretched and disconsolate, to her chamber, in order to conceal her grief and despondence ; and wished she could have been permitted to hide herself from her father and the whole world.

The next day Sir Henry Alford's steward brought a letter to Mr. Woodley, which he had received strict orders to deliver into his own hand ;—he did so, and instantly departed. Mr. Woodley broke the seal with impatience, and read as follows :

“ Sir,

“ Sir,

“ As I never sup-
 posed I should have to reproach
 you with ingratitude, or a mean du-
 plicity of conduct, I am both hurt
 and surprised at being compelled to
 the disagreeable necessity of writing
 this. Was it not sufficient to the
 gratification of your pride, vanity,
 or your poverty, that we loaded you
 with favours, (undeserving as you
 were of our friendship) rescued you
 from a state of obscurity, and re-
 moved every want from you and
 yours?—Would nothing less satisfy
 your ambition but to ensnare the
 heir of an ancient, honourable,
 and opulent family; and basely
 connive at his carrying on an
 intrigue with your equally artful
 and designing daughter?—Did you
 vainly

“ vainly and presumptuously imagine,
 “ that a little paltry beauty could
 “ atone for the want of birth, con-
 “ nections, and fortune?—Could your
 “ pride really lead you to such daring,
 “ vain, and aspiring hopes, as to sup-
 “ pose that either Lady Alford or
 “ myself would ever give consent that
 “ our thoughtless son should form so
 “ mean and degrading an alliance?
 “ It would have gratified your ambi-
 “ tion, no doubt, that the heir of the
 “ house of Alford should have married
 “ Ellen Woodley ; but it would have
 “ humbled ours to the dust.”

“ It is fortunate for us that your
 “ base schemes were discovered before
 “ they were ripe for execution ; and
 “ that we have saved our son from
 “ bringing such indelible disgrace on
 “ himself.

" himself and family. The ingra-
 " titude, the vile duplicity of your
 " conduct, has cancelled every obli-
 " gation that we otherwise should
 " have been happy to remember,—
 " I mean your attention to Edwin,
 " when he first became your pupil.
 " Notwithstanding which, I have left
 " orders with my steward to pay you
 " an hundred pounds more than re-
 " mains due on your salary. 'Tis,
 " however, the last favour you must
 " ever expect to receive from
 " Henry Alford."

Mr. Woodley had said, perhaps his
 patron would account for his abrupt
 departure ; but he little expected that
 it would have been accounted for in
 such haughty, unfriendly, and cruel
 terms. He read the letter over many
 times ;

times ; but every perusal of it only served to increase his agitation and surprise. He knew not what to think, and could with difficulty prevail upon himself to believe all this was real. He had never in one moment of his life suspected that Mr. Alford had any other partiality for his daughter than what their situation, from being in a manner educated together, and the unavoidable intimacy in which they lived, authorized. If he had ever supposed it possible that Edwin had loved his daughter, he would not have hesitated, but told his suspicions to his parents. He would question Ellen ; but it was impossible she could have deceived him in a matter of so much importance. She was too artless, too sincere ; he would not injure her by his suspicions. He would wait
till

till he himself was more composed before he made her uneasy by imparting the contents of this insulting and cruel letter. He would first observe her cautiously, and if he found she had deceived him, no longer complain of Sir Henry Alford's injustice; but of his Ellen's imprudence, her want of duty to her father, and ingratitude to the best friends providence had ever given him.

Distressed as any one may suppose, this good and worthy man must be on this alarming occasion, he met his family at dinner with the same gentle composure as usual; and addressed his daughter with the same sweetness she had ever been accustomed to hear from the lips of her venerable father. Ellen having been informed that Sir Henry Alford's

Alford's steward had called that morning, eagerly enquired of her father if he had heard where the family were gone, and when they meant to return. He assured her he had not, adding, he never expected he should have that honour. "Never! my dear Sir," cried Ellen, laying down her knife and fork—"are we then never to see him more? will not Edwin return? Ah, what are we to do without him?" "Without him!" replied Mr. Woodley; "do you then only regret the loss of one friend, Ellen? I thought we had, by this unexpected turn of affairs, lost three." Ellen blushed at this little reproof,—she was silent and confused. Mr. Woodley continued—"I own, that I am sensibly hurt at the sudden and secret departure of the family from the Grove, and without one
in-

interested motive for being so; tho' on that account I have great reason to be sorry, not indeed for myself, but for my children. My wishes, I thank heaven, have never soared above the situation in which I am placed; and I hope their's will never presume to aspire beyond it. If they should, their error will prove their punishment; and I should then have the mortification of leaving them dissatisfied with a situation, which I have ever considered as the happiest, and most secure from the dangerous temptations of vice and folly.

Ellen dared not venture to open her lips, lest her faltering tongue should betray her emotion. Mr. Woodley observed her with silent regret. He began to fear that if Edwin had

had been attached to his daughter, she on her part had not been indifferent. Her tears, her anxiety which could not be concealed, alarmed him; and he was determined to take the earliest opportunity of shewing her the letter he had received, and if possible convince her of the inexcusable folly of having encouraged such aspiring and dangerous hopes.

C H A P.

C H A P. XIV.

IN the mean time, Sir Henry Alford's family having left Myrtle-Grove in so abrupt a manner, gave rise to many conjectures, as to the real cause; but as they had carefully kept their reasons from the world, none but the parties concerned, could possibly be acquainted with them: and as the one from pride, and the other from prudence, endeavoured

voured to hide their distress, it never was known to the public.

Many, however, had the cruelty to rejoice at the loss which the worthy family at the parsonage sustained. Ellen's finery had made her a number of secret enemies; and her having rejected the offers of Frederick Denison, raised a violent clamour against her pride and vanity, which alone, it was unanimously agreed, could have led her to refuse so worthy a young man.

Poor Ellen, though a stranger to all these malicious and unjust reflections upon her conduct, was completely miserable. Joy and pleasure had gone with Edwin; and the sadness and despondency of her own mind, threw

threw a gloom on every scene around. She once walked near the environs of Myrtle-Grove, but she hurried instantly from the spot in which she had known so much felicity;—the dear,—the much loved owners of that sweet mansion were absent,—and with them had fled her happiness. Edwin had carried away her peace; and she mourned in secret the loss of him she had never dared to think would be more to her than a friend, though he had called himself her lover.

Mr. Woodley observed the alteration and increasing dejection of his daughter, with a mixture of anguish and resentment. He was now convinced he had been deceived; and as rigorously condemned his own

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blind-

blindness and inattention, as he did her youthful and unguarded imprudence.

Calling her one morning into his study, he presented her with Sir Henry Alford's letter, and bade her read the contents with attention. "If you are innocent of what is there alleged against you, my dearest Ellen, you may read it with the same indifference and contempt which I felt on perusing it."

She took the letter with a mixture of terror and despair; but no sooner had she glanced her eye over the cruel contents, than it dropt from her trembling hand, and she sunk back on her chair unable to speak or move. Mr. Woodley called for assistance,

stance, and by proper applications Ellen soon recovered; but she dared not lift her eyes from the ground, lest they should encounter those of her father;—she opened not her lips 'till she was roused from her lethargy of sorrow by the following address:

“Unhappy girl! I fear you are guilty.—You have deceived your father, and betrayed yourself.—You have dared to listen to the son of your benefactors.—His persuasions have led you from the practice of your duty, into the dangerous paths of deceit.—You have brought disappointment and shame upon yourself, reproach and ignominy upon the grey hairs of your father.—You have robbed your own heart of peace, and planted thorns in the path of

H 2 him,

him, who has vainly endeavoured to protect you from danger and guard you from care."

Ellen could hear no more. She sunk at the feet of that parent whom 'till this moment she had never seen seriously displeased. She informed him of all that had passed between her and Mr. Alford;—repeated their conversations on the subject of love;—but in doing so, she discovered, how dear he was to her heart. She promised to atone, by a whole life of penitence, for this her first deviation from prudence and duty. She blamed her own indiscretion, condemned her own weakness, with greater severity than the displeasure of her indulgent parent had ventured to assume; and appeared so lost in the

the anguish of her own self-reproaches, that it was not possible for her father longer to withhold his forgiveness. He therefore raised her from the ground, pressed her to his bosom, and whilst he wept over her with tears of parental tenderness, promised never more to reproach her with her fault, if she strictly kept her word with him; and never, if chance should again throw Mr. Alford in her way, listen to him any more as a lover, nor receive or answer any letters that might be sent from so dangerous a quarter. He then, but with the utmost gentleness, endeavoured to convince her of the folly, as well as the imprudence of her conduct; in permitting her heart to be ensnared, by the fascinating tale of love from one so much her

H 3 superior.

superior. He next informed her that vows and promises from his own sex, at so early an age, as that of Mr. Alford, were little to be relied upon; and that the secrecy he had solicited her to observe, was a proof that he was neither honorable nor sincere in his professions.

Mr. Woodley settled his account with Sir Henry Alford's steward,—but had too much honesty, and real magnanimity, to take any more than remained due for his salary.

About this time Valentine happily arrived at the village, to spend six weeks at his father's. But how was he distressed and astonished at the alteration a few short months had made at the parsonage! His sister,
his

his lovely sister, was a mere shadow of her former self;—the rose had faded,—had died upon her cheek,—and a death-like paleness prevailed. The song of chearful innocence was heard no more,—no longer warbled in notes wild, enchanting, and captivating, as those of the linnet or nightingale. The piano forte stood useless; whilst she, who once could make it speak to the heart, was sad and silent. His father too was much altered. The change he saw in his daughter, had not only conquered all his resentment, but given a fatal wound to his peace. Valentine heard the sad tale from his father, and was earnestly requested to use his tenderest endeavours to sooth his sister's disappointed heart, and if possible restore her to happiness. Va-

Valentine readily promised to undertake what his fondness for Ellen made him desirous to accomplish. For many weeks the name of Alford was not pronounced in the dwelling of Mr. Woodley. It was agreed between the father and son that it would be best to avoid a subject which would only serve to revive in the care worn remembrance of the lovely sufferer, what ought to be forever banished.

Valentine walked, read, and rode out with his sister; but his endeavours to restore either her cheerfulness, health, or peace, were ineffectual. She had been forgiven by her father, but she could not forgive herself.—She had been torn from the dear object of her tender regard;—but she could not forget him. She lamented
her

her weakness;—but felt it was a weakness she could not conquer.

Every one saw the alteration in the once blooming Ellen, with unaffected regret; and those who had once been most rigid to condemn, were the readiest to pity. Frederic Dennison made a second offer of his hand, but received a more positive denial than at first; and therefore being deprived of all hopes of ever succeeding with Miss Woodley, consoled himself with marrying a young girl in an adjoining village.

When Ellen had ceased to cherish the sweet expectation of ever again hearing any tidings of her lover, and had concluded he had lost all remembrance of her, a letter was left at

H 5

Mr.

Mr. Woodley's, by a countryman, who hurried away the moment it was delivered. It was directed to Ellen, and though the hand was unknown to her, she determined not to open it but in the presence of her father; she therefore carried it to him, and having received his sanction to discover the contents, broke the seal and read the following lines.

“ My Dearest Ellen,

“ I was unexpectedly,
 “ and in a manner forcibly carried
 “ from Myrtle-Grove; and 'till this
 “ instant, long as we have been se-
 “ parated, I have been so carefully
 “ watched, that I have never been
 “ able to steal one moment to inform
 “ you of what I have suffered since
 we last saw each other. I have
 “ been

" been ill, notwithstanding which, I
 " have been continually hurried from
 " one place to another. I have
 " been loaded with the most cruel
 " and severe reproaches,—threatened,
 " —confined,—insulted,—ridiculed.
 " I have heard you, my lovely Ellen,
 " abused,—calumniated;—but have
 " exculpated you from blame. I have
 " been told of your being married;—
 " but I have judged your feelings by
 " those of my own heart, and felt
 " redoubled anguish from knowing
 " that you, my Ellen, shared my
 " sorrows. Yet I sometimes feared,
 " lest from so many strange circum-
 " stances, you might be led to sus-
 " pect my truth and honor. I have
 " avowed my love, and my resolu-
 " tion never to forget you, or love
 " another woman. Dear Ellen, though
 " absent,

“ absent, you are ever present to my
“ view. This temporary but cruel
“ separation has only increased the
“ passion it was meant to destroy. I
“ find you more than ever necessary
“ to my happiness. Without you,
“ my Ellen, wealth and splendor
“ want the power to charm, or give
“ pleasure. In the dwelling of my
“ revered and respectable tutor, all my
“ treasure is placed. — There may it
“ rest secure, ’till I can claim what
“ I value beyond the wealth of
“ worlds. I am afraid, my gentle
“ Ellen has been an equal sufferer. —
“ The sweet sensibility you discovered
“ when you saw my life endangered,
“ has given rise to the most soul-re-
“ vivifying hope I ever cherished, in
“ the very moment it tortured me
“ with anguish. Though your
“ tongue

" tongue never ventured to tell the
 " desponding Edwin that he was
 " loved, the tear of which I once
 " bereaved you in the arbour of
 " Valentine, was the blessed mes-
 " senger of peace to my soul. Yes,
 " I must believe I am beloved!—in
 " that sweet hope I live. Ellen, I
 " will love you ever,—do not then
 " forget me. Let no one persuade
 " you to give your hand to another.
 " I claim it now in the name of love.
 " I will one day claim it at the altar
 " sacred to love, truth, and honor;—
 " for whilst I live I can be only
 " your's.

" Edwin Alford."

Ellen wept over the letter, she
 pressed it to her snowy bosom in the
 presence of her father, who was sur-
 prised.

prised and alarmed at its contents. His resolution respecting it was immediately formed. He requested his daughter to give it him, and she instantly complied; after which she silently withdrew to her chamber, and slept much better than she had ever done since Edwin had been torn from her sight. Joy once more reached her heart; Edwin's tender expressions were the sweet opiates that lulled her to repose.

C H A P.

C H A P. XV.

MR. Woodley had permitted his daughter to read a few of our best English novels,—one of which had been Pamela. The name of the author had sufficient influence to obtain it admission at the parsonage, as an amusement for Ellen in her moments of despondence. Mr. B— had married a servant,—her situation was by no means so degrading,—Edwin's letter therefore gave rise to the most flattering

tering and delusive hopes. He had promised to love her ever, and she secretly wished it were in her power to reward his constancy and truth. The lovers she had read of were not half so amiable, so generous, and sincere, as her dear and faithful Edwin.

Mr. Woodley the next morning wrote to Sir Henry Alford, in which letter he enclosed that which his daughter had received.

“ Sir Henry,
 “ The enclosed letter having by some means been
 “ conveyed to the hand of my daughter, I should have thought myself
 “ the base and despicable wretch
 “ which you, Sir, imagine me, had I
 “ hesitated one moment how to dispose
 “ pose.

“pose of it. Till I received from
 “you the intelligence of Mr. Alford’s
 “attachment to Ellen, I never even
 “suspected it. Had I done so, I
 “should have been as anxious to
 “prevent their meeting as yourself;
 “and as careful to preserve *my* daugh-
 “ter’s peace as you would the interest
 “and happiness of *your* son. I have
 “lived more than sixty years without
 “ever knowing the corroding pangs
 “of ambition ; and the uninterrupted
 “health I have enjoyed has amply
 “repaid the want of those luxuries
 “for which I never sighed. I should
 “therefore think myself unpardonable,
 “to stain with guilt the evening of a
 “life, whose morning had been
 “spent with contentment and in-
 “nocence.”

“ My

“ My daughter has acquainted me
 “ with every circumstance that passed
 “ between her and Mr. Alford,—a
 “ mutual affection has long subsisted
 “ between the offending parties. She
 “ has suffered her youthful heart to be
 “ ensnared; inexperienced and un-
 “ suspicious, she has not concealed
 “ her partiality from her lover;—her
 “ error will be a sufficient punish-
 “ ment. I shall not encrease her suf-
 “ ferings by an unkind reproach:
 “ Time, I doubt not, will restore the
 “ young people to a proper sense of
 “ their duty, to reason, and to hap-
 “ piness.”

“ I thank you, Sir, and the amiable
 “ Lady Alford, for the many favours
 “ your liberality conferred on me and
 “ mine, and can only regret that this
 “ un-

“unfortunate predilection of your
 “son’s should have compelled you to
 “consider those favours undeservedly
 “bestowed; on which account I
 “must beg your pardon for having
 “declined the last proof of your gene-
 “rosity which was tendered to me by
 “your steward. Long accustomed to
 “live upon a small income, I can re-
 “turn to my original poverty, with-
 “out repining at the loss of those in-
 “dulgences which only served to in-
 “crease my satisfaction, because
 “given by the hand of friendship and
 “benevolence.”

“Born without pride, and a stranger
 “to ambition, I have so well known
 “the blessings I enjoyed, by being
 “happily exempt from the pangs
 “those tormenting passions entail
 “upon

“ upon their slaves, as to be particu-
 “ larly anxious to guard my children
 “ from their snares. If therefore Ellen
 “ has been taught to love, it was nei-
 “ ther interest nor splendor that in-
 “ fluenced her heart; and I trust
 “ they will prove sufficient antidotes
 “ to effect her cure and expel the
 “ poison of love.”

“ I know the amiable, but at the
 “ same time, the determined dispo-
 “ sition of Mr. Alford, whenever de-
 “ sirous of gaining his purpose. Love
 “ at his age is perhaps the most dif-
 “ ficult passion to conquer. You will
 “ therefore excuse me, for venturing
 “ to tell you that gentle and generous
 “ methods will be most likely to suc-
 “ ceed. His mind, susceptible of
 “ tenderness and open to conviction,
 “ will

“ will not be wrought to your purpose
“ by harshness. You may, in the
“ language of affection, prevail upon
“ him to see his error ; but if you at-
“ tempt to use compulsion you will
“ add obstinacy to imprudence, and
“ he will plead your harshness as an
“ excuse for his continued disobe-
“ dience.”

“ That all your wishes may be
“ speedily gratified in seeing the hap-
“ piness of your son completed by an
“ union suitable to his rank, is the
“ sincere and fervent prayer of

“ Your obliged,

“ And very humble servant,

“ Henry Woodley.”

It is now time to give some account
of what had passed in the Alford fa-
mily

mily from the time of their departure from Myrtle-Grove.

Whilst Edwin was confined to his apartment by indisposition, every thing was prepared with the utmost secrecy for their leaving the Grove. As soon as he was able to travel, Sir Henry and Lady Alford proposed going with him on a little excursion round the country. Edwin readily agreed to the proposal; as he was impatient to obtain his liberty that he might be again allowed to revisit the parsonage. He therefore, when the carriage was drawn up to the door, stepped into it with high spirits; and determined that very evening to steal from the Grove in order to obtain a sight of the lovely Ellen, on whom his hopes, his wishes, and his heart relied

lied for future happiness. He had not a thought or wish in which her idea was not blended; and the most distant fear of being separated, or living without her, filled his youthful bosom with despair, and threw a gloomy sadness over his most flattering and brilliant prospects.

During the first part of the day all was cheerfulness and harmony. They stopt at an inn about twenty miles distance from the Grove. When dinner was over, which passed cheerfully, Sir Henry ordered the carriage, which Edwin supposed was to reconvey them home; and he secretly rejoiced at the thoughts of arriving in time to pay the visit he had planned — that very evening.

After

After being seated some time in the coach, he observed, that instead of returning to Myrtle-Grove, they continued driving most furiously the contrary way. He looked out, and then eagerly enquired if the coachman had not made a mistake, as he believed they were on the London road.

“We are going to spend a few months in London and Bath, my dear Edwin,” replied Lady Alford. “The vile country agrees so ill with your health, we have for some time determined to try what change of scene would do for you; and as you were so averse to listen to any proposal for leaving the Grove, we had recourse to a little stratagem in getting you from its gloomy and unhealthy environs. You have studied too much of late;
the

the amusements of the great world will not only restore your health, but wear off those rustic and uncouth manners which you began to adopt; which would not only disgrace your rank and exalted situation, but bring an everlasting reproach on our want of judgment, for suffering you any longer to mix with such common mortals as our set of country neighbours."

Edwin was so surprised, so mortified and disappointed, that for some moments he was unable to speak. When he recovered the use of speech, he addressed his mother in the utmost agitation. "Going to London! Madam! what could possibly induce you to think of going there? 'Tis the very place I detest the most. I never

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am well three days together in London. If you had acquainted Mr. Woodley with your intention of taking me there, I am sure he would have endeavoured to dissuade you from your purpose; and if he, like myself, has been kept in ignorance of your design, he must think us very capricious, ungrateful, and strange people. You might almost as well have thought of sending me to the black hole in Calcutta, for the recovery of my health, as to the smoaky and foggy regions of London ”

“ Why did you mention the name of that infernal hole?” cried Sir Henry, turning pale. “ Surely, every thing serves to bring disagreeable reflections to my mind.—Every body unites to torment me.—Boy! boy! you, I suppose,

pose, were given for a scourge to punish the sins of your father!"

Edwin was again struck with surprise; but yet he could not submit to be torn from his dear tutor, and still dearer Ellen, without shewing his reluctance, his indignation, and discontent. He again addressed his mother,—
 "Pray, Madam, did you tell Miss Woodley that we were going to leave the grove?"

"Indeed, I told no one of our intention. I know no business either old Woodley, or his forward, upstart daughter, can possibly have with our proceedings. The old fellow, was, during our pleasure appointed to superintend your education; and has been well, too well paid for the little pains he has taken to improve you.

Surely then, there could be no occasion to consult such poor, undistinguished people, respecting our proceedings. Your father will order his steward to settle accounts with him, at a proper time."

Old Woodley!—too well paid!—upstart daughter!—what unusual sounds!—what harsh, ungrateful language was this in the listening ear of our young impassioned lover, whose heart was wounded as with a dagger's point! his cheek turned pale, and his whole frame shook with indignation. For some moments Edwin silently looked at his parents with eyes of enquiring surprise. At length recovering himself, "Good God," he cried, "what Madam! what is the meaning of all this?—from what originates this cruel
and

and sudden change in your sentiments? What can Mr. and Miss Woodley have done to incur your's and my father's displeasure? I thought, I hoped you did, and would ever continue to consider them as worthy and valuable friends.—I am sure they are justly entitled to your gratitude and friendship, for their attention and unremitting civility to me. To Mr. Woodley alone am I indebted for the little knowledge I possess; and, I speak it with shame and regret, the good and venerable man had as much trouble to polish and harmonize my mind to a relish for the divine precepts of virtue and benevolence, as the statuary on his first attempt to form the figure of an Adonis from the solid rock, or a Howard to teach the unfeeling and most savage part of the world, hu-

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manity and compassion for the sufferings of their fellow creatures."

"Yes," replied Sir Henry, with an ironical sneer of contempt, "we are, to be sure, much indebted to them on your account; and are much pleased to be thus informed of our mighty obligations. I do not in the least doubt or suspect that they have been wanting in every flattering attention to you, young Sir; and you, I presume, have not been deficient in making liberal and very singular returns for the numerous favours you received. Of what nature these favours were, I am not so ignorant as your folly and inexperience may have led you to believe."

"I

"I do not rightly understand you," retorted Edwin, (with more spirit than prudence) "I only know, that if I had heard any other man than Sir Henry Alford, throw an improper reflection on my respectable tutor, or his lovely daughter, I should, young as I am, have wanted temper to bear it, as my duty now compels me to do from him."

"Audacious boy," exclaimed the Baronet, in a rage, "why don't you at once throw off the ties of duty and obedience, and completely give a finishing stroke to your character, by attempting the glorious action of chastizing your father for his insolence, in daring to convince you of your folly? Why don't you at once send a dagger to his heart, for exerting his

endeavours, guided by paternal affection, in order to draw you from those snares which were artfully laid for your destruction, and have already so far entangled you as to make you insensible to your first of moral duties? Is it for this hour of misery, to be thus ungratefully rewarded, after braving the dangers of the sea and the pestilential air of a foreign clime? Have I not continually toiled to make you the richest heir in England? and how is it to be repaid?—by seeing you eager to throw yourself away upon a little, obscure, artful country girl, whose baby face and wanton lures, were the toys that captivated the easy dupe, and wrought him to her purpose.”

“ If

“If it was for my sake, Sir, you braved these dangers, of which you speak so feelingly,” replied Edwin, “I am sorry for it;—a more moderate share of the goods of fortune would have gratified my ambition, and satisfied the wants of nature, which are easily supplied. However ungrateful or foolish you may think me, I consider myself to be much more indebted to your paternal tenderness, for placing me under the care of a pious and virtuous preceptor, than for all the pains you took to secure me an abundance of wealth. I was, at my first being brought to England;” he continued, “truly a savage; and as much uninstructed in every moral and practical duty, as any of the poor wretches whom I had

been suffered, unproved, to misuse and torment."

Sir Henry lifted up his arm to strike his son, and enquired who it was had taught him to insult his father with such provoking language;—but supposed it was his exemplary preceptor.

Lady Alford, alarmed at the violence of her husband and the spirited resolution of her son, in defending the character of Mr. Woodley, imposed silence on the latter; and endeavoured, with all the soothing eloquence she was mistress of, to bring the former into better humour. That, however, was not an undertaking easy to accomplish. Sir Henry Alford was violent in his passions;

accustomed to have his will obeyed as soon as known, he seldom forgave the person who attempted to contradict or thwart his humour.

The rest of the journey was passed in murmurings or silent discontent; and the whole party was, without attempting to disguise their sentiments, mutually dissatisfied with each other. Edwin was now convinced, beyond possibility of doubt, that his love for Ellen was discovered by his parents. Innumerable alarming apprehensions arose to distress him. *He* doubted not but every method would be made use of to separate him and Miss Woodley forever; and too well knowing the disposition of his father, when disappointed of any wish he had once
in.

indulged, he even trembled for her personal safety; 'till he recollected he was in England, whose gentle but protecting laws his father dared not, great and powerful as he was, attempt to violate.

On their arrival in London, Edwin lived like a prisoner of state in the house of his parents. Every method was made use of, that art, experience, and resolution could contrive, in order to compel him to give up all thoughts of ever seeing Ellen Woodley again; and to obtain a solemn promise that he would never write to her, or make any attempt to see her till he had conquered his imprudent, and in their opinion, degrading attachment. But all their stratagems and efforts were exerted in

in vain; Edwin remained unshaken by either threats or promises.—All the concession they could on his part obtain, was a promise never to marry her without their consent; and as they were determined never to give their consent to so preposterous an alliance, they thought themselves, for the present, secured from the dreaded evil:—for in what other light could they consider an alliance with a young girl, who, though possessed of every virtue that can grace the mind, and every beauty to captivate the heart,—had neither high birth to give her consequence in the fashionable world, or a fortune to support its luxuries and follies.

When Mr. Alford had, by this promise, in some measure regained a
part

part of his parents confidence, he was hurried from one place of diversion to another.--He had no time he could call his own, nor an hour to indulge in serious reflection. A constant croud of company, and a round of amusements, succeeded each other so rapidly, as were sufficient to banish the idea of every object but that of pleasure; and to conquer every attachment of the heart, but for the frivolous and dangerous enjoyment of dissipation, extravagance, and vanity. Strict orders had been secretly given to every servant in the family, not to carry any letters out of the house, unknown to Sir Henry and Lady Alford, on pain of instant dismissal from their service;—and Edwin was not permitted to go out without being accompanied by one
of

of his parents or some of their confidential friends, whom they had bribed to be watchful of all his actions. He was introduced into several noblemen's families, who had daughters to marry, and who would have been gratified and happy to have seen the heir of Sir Henry Alford a captive to their charms. At every public place he was sure to hear the most exalted accounts, and the most flattering encomiums bestowed on Lady Harriet,—Lady Mary,—or Lady Sarah.—Every fine woman of family was pointed out to him as worthy of possessing his heart, and sharing his fortune. Great pains were taken, by a servile set of flatterers, to give him a proper idea of his own consequence, and to bribe his passions into the slavish toils of ambition ;

bition;—but all their endeavours were repelled by a resolute and unshaken constancy, which baffled and disappointed their united efforts, and the poor, — simple, — unnoticed, — undistinguished — Ellen Woodley, triumphed in spite of a number of rival and titled beauties, who used their utmost endeavours to enslave her lover, and bring him to their feet.

C H A P.

C H A P. XVI.

EDWIN, however, finding how much an avowed opposition to his parents proceedings enraged them, went wherever they desired him, and made no objection to any of their plans or parties. He accompanied them to court, at which place he had the honour of being graciously received and particularly distinguished by his sovereign, notwithstanding it began to be whispered,

pered, with the utmost confidence, that Sir Henry Alford's behaviour in India had been so highly and glaringly reprehensible,—that a strict investigation of his conduct must inevitably take place, at the meeting of parliament,—when he would be impeached for high crimes and misdemeanors, whilst in office abroad; as some papers lately arrived from India, had been brought to light, which stated many facts that threw such an odium on his character and behaviour, as demanded redress, and claimed the immediate attention of government;—and which, if proved, might be attended with very alarming consequences to himself and all his connexions.

A grand and superb masquerade, was to be given at the Pantheon, for which great preparations had been making some weeks. Edwin was ordered to attend a party of gay young men of fashion, to that scene of alluring dissipation, where every vice, by favor of a mask, could be indulged without restraint ; and every licentious action screened from censure by the fictitious character assumed for the purpose of unrestrained indulgence.

A scheme was laid to draw the unsuspecting Edwin into the snares of a celebrated courtesan, whom it was the fashion to admire, and who had been noticed by people of such high rank, that it was considered as an honor to be enlisted in the number

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ber of her favourites ; and to dissipate a fortune in order to purchase her smiles by the indulgence of her agreeable caprices and elegant extravagances. Some of Sir Henry Alford's friends gave the lady her directions, and promised gold and diamonds in abundance, if she could so far captivate young Edwin as to break through and make him weary of a mean and degrading attachment, which threatened to disappoint him of his most favourite and aspiring hopes. The lady thus singularly authorized, it may be presumed, readily undertook a task so conformable to her taste ; which however she found more difficult to accomplish than her vanity and seducing powers had led her to suppose. To avoid the snare, which Edwin had a hint given him would be laid to draw

draw him from the path of rectitude, in order to entangle him in the toils of pleasure, he determined to disregard her allurements.

He therefore resolutely and patiently withstood the pointed ridicule of his licentious companions, by refusing the tempting beverage which sparkled in the glass; and amidst the noisy clamours of intemperate mirth refused to drink away his senses. The lady made some flattering advances; but he was insensible to the compliment she paid him. Neither the studied elegance of her dress, or the beauty of her figure, excited any other emotion than pity, mixed with contempt. Finding, however, by the whispers and behaviour of his companions, who took every opportunity of throwing
them

them in each other's way, that there was more in this business than he at first suspected, *he* hinted to the lady not to lose her time, which she might employ to so much greater advantage, in a vain pursuit of one already enslaved by innocence, united with beauty, in its most lovely and interesting form. She must therefore excuse his being insensible to the studied arts and disgusting blandishments of vice. The lady repeated this sermon of Joseph, as she ironically called Edwin, to a large party of her friends and admirers; and vowed he deserved perpetual banishment from every gay circle in the metropolis.

In vain the company walked, talked, or formed parties for the dance; in vain the witty addressed him or the humorous ridiculed his gravity; he
was

was far distant from pleasure, though in the temple dedicated to her service. Sad and dejected in the midst of splendor, mirth, luxury, and folly. Every thing was very elegant, but in his opinion very dull. The roses bloomed in vain, for they were not such roses as his Ellen reared in her little garden; the table was spread with every rarity to tempt and gratify the appetite of the most luxurious epicure, but yet it appeared far inferior, far less gratifying, than the simple repast he had so often shared at the beloved parsonage; and though champaign, claret, and burgundy sparkled in the glass, he would gladly have given them for a glass of water presented to him by the lily hand of the gentle Ellen. The only object which he saw that could captivate his attention, and draw him from his own sad reflections, was,
amongst

amongst other trees (apparently growing out of their natural terra firma) a weeping willow, furrounded with enumerable flowers in full blossom. The willow reminded him of one he had heard Miss Woodley admire, and in imagination he saw her weeping beneath its trembling branches ; and lamenting the cruel separation, which ambition had contrived, to divide two hearts united in the silken fetters of generous love and innocent affection.

He was next carried to Bath, Bright-helmstone, and many other places of general resort, in hopes that a variety of scenes would in time teach him to forget the foolish engagement he had formed ; but his affection for the fair object of their dislike remained firm and unshaken.